Culture, context and family networks : Value and Knowledge Transfers among Eastern European Jews in Nordic Countries, 1880-1940

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Routledge
2019-01-07

Kieding Banik , V & Ekholm , L K 2019 , Culture, context and family networks : Value and Knowledge Transfers among Eastern European Jews in Nordic Countries, 1880-1940 . in M Kaarninen , U Aatsinki & J Annola (eds) , Families, Values, and the Transfer of Knowledge in Northern Societies, 1500--2000 . 1 edn , Routledge Studies in Cultural History , vol. 2018 , Routledge , New York , pp. 120-141 .

http://hdl.handle.net/10138/317383

acceptedVersion

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Introduction

In 1864, at the age of 43, Mordechai Schwartzman moved with his wife, Sara, their four children, and one of his daughters-in-law to Malmö, Sweden. Their hometown, Nayshtot, was a small town on the border between Eastern Prussia and the Lithuanian part of Imperial Russia.[2] Located by the river, the town was multilingual, with German and Lithuanian sides, but above all, it was very Jewish and the majority spoke Yiddish. In 1835, Jews constituted seventy-six percent of the population, and they remained a majority throughout the century.[3] It was a typical Jewish *shtetl* with wooden synagogues and a centralised Jewish settlement. Its Jewish inhabitants had a long history as traders and middlemen, both locally and between the different European kingdoms fighting over the region.

Shortly after his arrival, Schwartzman, the son of a merchant, opened a shop and changed his first name to the Swedish -sounding Markus. Over the years, several of his relatives – along with other Jews from the same region – also moved to Sweden, and from there to other Nordic countries.

[1] We wish to acknowledge that Rita Bredefeldt played an important part in an early draft of this article.
[2] *Nayshtot* (Yiddish) is today the Lithuanian border town Kudirkos Naumiestis. It is also known by its German name, Neustadt, and its Polish name, Władisławow. Today, the city is situated on the border of Russian Kaliningrad and Lithuania. We will use the name *Nayshtot* in our article.
[3] The general information on Kudirkos Naumiestis is taken from a digital collection 'Preserving our Litvak Heritage', http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/lithuania4/lit4_690.html (retrieved 23 April 2015) and http://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/naishtot/naishtot1.html (retrieved 23 April 2015) by Joseph Rosin.

We begin this chapter by looking at Markus and Sara Schwartzman and the choices the family made. We then compare and contrast our findings with other examples of Eastern European Jewish migrants in late nineteenth- and early twentieth -century Sweden, Norway, and Finland. Our approach shows how family migration seems to have continued within the region.

Using Schwartzman, his relatives, and their descendants as a focal point for this story, we aim to analyse the shift from being members of a very Jewish community in Eastern Europe to becoming members of a small ethnic and religious community in a predominately Lutheran, Northern European society. More specifically, we examine how the Jewish migrants turned their previous experiences in Eastern Europe into tools for making the transition to their life in their new country as smooth as possible. Furthermore, we will investigate how they transferred this knowledge, formal and informal, to the following generations. We also analyse how they remained Jews while at the same time becoming Swedes, Finns, Danes, and Norwegians. Finally, we discuss which values – both Jewish and non-Jewish – played a part in these processes.

Ever since scholarly interest in Jewish history in the Nordic countries emerged in the 1980s, studies have been influenced by the rise of migration and ethnic history (Hoffmann 2016, 203–222). The literature has, among other things, aimed to remind the contemporary readership of the ethnic diversity of the past and the fact that the Nordic countries have been a region of immigration as well as emigration. Moreover, it has been thought that the experience of Jewish migrants could provide a historical perspective to present debates on the integration of minorities.

While the Nordic countries seem similar from the outside, their stories concerning Jewish migrants are very different: the history of Jewish settlement and local legislation has varied considerably, not to mention the different historical fates of the communities as members of the different nation states during World War II (on examples of the variety within the Nordic countries, see Broberg, Runbom, and Tydén 1986; Hoffmann 2016, 203–222; Ekholm, Muir, and Silvennoinen 2016). While the kingdoms of Denmark and Sweden had strict bans on Jews in the early modern period, Danish and Swedish Jews had full civil rights by the 1880 (Bredefeldt 2008, 158; Thing 2008, 31). Many of these families had Western European roots and were on the verge of assimilation when the Jewish migration from Eastern Europe began in the 1860s.

By contrast, Jews were not allowed to settle in Norway until 1851. However, they gained full civil rights as non-Lutherans almost immediately. Until the arrival of Eastern European Jews from the 1890s onwards, there were hardly any Jews in the country. The case in Finland was different again: the situation was more akin to Eastern Europe when it comes to nineteenth century Jewish history. As part of Imperial Russia until its independence in 1917, all Jews in Finland were Russian subjects and were not granted Finnish citizenship. Only Jews who had served in the Russian military or as professionals hired by the military could obtain resident permits, and only then in three cities. The Finnish Senate reaffirmed edicts forbidding Jews from staying in Finland as late as 1889 (Torvinen 1989, 59–60).

With such contextual differences, the history of Jews in the Nordic countries has understandably been written from a national perspective. This choice has also followed an integrationist paradigm; the literature has aimed to show how Jews in the Nordic countries became Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, and Finnish Jews.

With due respect to such contextual differences, this article instead focuses on themes that unite the history of Jewish migrants and thus challenge a methodologically nationalist approach. In all the Nordic countries, Eastern European Jews did as Markus Schwartzman did when he settled in Malmö: they started careers as peddlers or established small stores or factories. There were local and individual differences, as we will show, but in general, Jews from Eastern Europe took rather similar paths in all the Nordic countries.

Nevertheless, the story of the Nordic Jews cannot be analysed in a solely Nordic context. They were part of a wave of emigration that included some 2.4 million Jews between the 1880s and 1914 (Kupovetsky 2010). While the United States was the 'Land of Opportunity' for many, there were significant waves of emigration to growing cities like St Petersburg, Vienna, Berlin, Paris, and London. Others found opportunities in South America and the British colonies (Lederhendler 2014).

This Jewish mass migration has been a boundless source of inspiration for scholars ever since, and the ability and willingness of these Jews to integrate into their new countries – plus their rapid social mobility both within and between generations – have been examined and analysed. The business historian Andrew Godley has compared the business performance of Jews of Eastern European heritage in London and New York. There was no difference between those who arrived in London and those who crossed the Atlantic in terms of marriage patterns and geographical, occupational, and social background. The business performance of Jews in New York, however, outstripped those living in London, and this outcome could not be explained by the values or skills the migrants brought with them. The only explanation for New York

Jews being so much more successful in business was, according to Godley (2001), the more entrepreneurial atmosphere – that is the culture – of the receiving country.

In his account on Jewish immigrants to the US, Eli Lederhendler (2009, 41) questions the geographical transfer of knowledge outlined above. He argues that coming from a relatively backward part of Russia – namely the Pale of Settlement[4] – was in fact a disadvantage. Few possessed modern industrial skills or vocational training, nor had they any successful commercial experience. The few individuals that actually had such expertise could not use it in their new country because the skills were based on a very limited ethnic market. Hence, he claims that being a new immigrant was difficult, regardless of previous experience.

However, there are other ways of integrating besides earning a living. The gender historian Paula Hyman has shown how the bourgeois values of the new homeland were important for the integration strategies chosen by Jewish immigrants. She argues that middle-class values, such as the upbringing of children, religious learning, and the ideal of female domesticity, were decisive in how Eastern European Jews integrated after arriving in the United States (Hyman 1995).

Furthermore, both contemporaries and later scholars have been astonished by the rapid social mobility of the Jewish migrants (Kuznets 1961, Kahan 1986, Godley 2001, Mendelsohn 2015). When trying to explain this, some scholars find endogenous factors, such as religion and culture, to be decisive. Referring to *Bildung* and the ancient Jewish tradition of literacy, they argue the combination of religious and secular education led to economic success (Bredefeldt 2008, Kaplan 1991). Others see the Jews' own economic experiences in trade, handicrafts, and

[4] In Imperial Russia, Jews were only permitted to live in restricted regions in western parts of the empire referred to as the Pale of Settlement, or sometimes just the Pale.

industrial work prior to emigration as a major prerequisite for advancement in the industrialising West (Kuznets 1961; Kahan 1986).

Further, some interpret Jewish social mobility through entrepreneurship as a strategy to avoid anti-Semitism at work. Self-employment also made it possible to keep the rules of the Sabbath and Jewish culture and traditions in general. Others have gone to extremes and claimed that anti-Semitism accounts for Jewish success: it made the Jews a 'nation of overachievers'. According to this latter opinion, exogenous factors were the most important, while endogenous factors played little part in creating the paradigm of success. Yet another group considers the Jews' social mobility a result of emancipation and *diminishing* anti-Semitism. The truth probably lies somewhere in the middle of all of these opinions or is rather a combination of them. Ultimately, it is an empirical question as to where and when Jews are studied.

We will apply – and challenge – these aspects in our study of the transfer of values and knowledge among Nordic Jews. Because of the regional character of our analysis, we use the experiences of Schwartzman family and relatives from Nayshtot as our point of departure. We use a family chronicle published in 1946, covering several generations of the Schwartzman family, the related Lapidus and Nissalowitz families, and their Nordic offspring (Koritzinsky 1946). In addition, we have used city directories, national censuses, applications for citizenship, and accounts from Jewish-owned companies as our main sources.

As the chronicle shows dates and places of births and deaths, years of emigration, and marriages – and in some cases occupational titles and degrees awarded – we can discuss the role of endogenous factors such as religion and culture on these families. However, it is imperative to keep in mind that matters like economic troubles, problems with the authorities, children born

outside wedlock, and other ‘darker’ sides of life are unreported in the types of sources we are using.

Focusing on the emigration of a typical Jewish family from a typical shtetl such as Nayshtot and the choices of their offspring that happened to settle within the Scandinavian core will enable us to discuss how selected values and knowledge were transferred between generations and across borders in a relatively ethnically, religiously, and culturally homogenous area with a predominantly Lutheran society and a strong presence of the state. However, we fully acknowledge that it is difficult to determine what is ‘Jewish’ and what derives from the experience of this particular family or geographical context. We therefore contrast our findings with other examples from other Jewish families and individuals.

The majority of Eastern European Jews who migrated to the Nordic countries had settled by the end of World War I. World War II was a profound change for all Europeans, but for the Jews and their communities, the Holocaust meant near total annihilation and destruction. The Norwegian Jewish population diminished severely during the German occupation, and the foundations of Jewish life had to be rebuilt in post-war Europe. Hence, we end our study in 1940. Nevertheless, the span of our study – from the 1860s until 1940 – allows for a thorough analysis over time and generations.

We will first discuss the reasons for emigration from places like Nayshtot. Next, we will continue by analysing how values evolved upon arriving and settling in the Nordic countries. As marriage patterns provide material for studying the maintenance of values brought from Eastern Europe, we will pay particular attention to how they developed in the Nordic Jewish

communities and among individuals. Finally, we will discuss the role of entrepreneurship and work. Following Hyman, we will pay particular attention to gender differences.

Migration from the east

As outlined above, the Schwartzmans were early though representative members of a major migration wave from Eastern Europe in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The high birth rate, contributing to an increase in the impoverishment of the landless population, was a push factor all over Eastern and Northern Europe, and the population growth among the Eastern European Jews has been estimated to be among the largest in Europe (Lederhendler 2014). Furthermore, the increase in public transport made travelling cheaper, and the relatively open borders of the United States and Western and Central Europe made it easier to migrate.

In folklore, shtetls are often depicted as static and conservative, as if nothing had changed since medieval times. In reality, Jewish life in nineteenth-century Eastern Europe was in upheaval. As the concepts of the Enlightenment and nationalist ideas permeated Europe, the autonomous structure of the 'Jewish nation' was challenged and shtetl life began to dissolve (Eliach 1998, Wasserstein 2012). Since medieval times, Jewish communities from Hamburg to Odessa were dominated by local rabbis and the elders of the congregations. These communities had been semi-autonomous in many matters, including matters not directly connected to religion. However, the secular character of the Enlightenment eventually influenced the Jewish communities, and the traditional authority of the rabbis and the elders was questioned by the authorities of Imperial Russia and Austro-Hungarian Empire, as well as from within. Increasingly, religion and tradition lost their strong grip on the Jewish population. While some chose complete assimilation, many more went into politics. Some developed a new kind of

secular nationalism and became Zionists, seeing a Jewish future in *Erez Israel* (Berkowitz 1993). Many turned to communism and socialism with Yiddish cultural aspirations (Eliach 1998). In sum, one could choose between various religious movements and even experience social mobility upward or downward without ever leaving Jewish circles.

While the Jews of Central and Western Europe were gradually emancipated, Imperial Russia aimed to modernise society by controlling its populations in various ways. Many underprivileged subjects within the Russian Empire encountered legal restrictions, but the Jewish populations were undoubtedly the most afflicted (Lohr 2012, 46; Slezkine 2002, 115; Nathans 2002, 23–24). Jews could not move freely within Russian -controlled areas; they were only permitted to live in restricted regions in the Pale of Settlement (Klier 2010). In addition, Jews were severely restricted in their choice of occupation. Mostly work consisted of providing surrounding villages with commercial services and trading at the local market place in the shtetls – selling produce from local farmers and import goods from the nearby city (Sorkin 1997, 35). Furthermore, threats of pogroms and long military conscriptions were important reasons for migration. Anti-Jewish measures increased dramatically after the assassination of Czar Alexander II in 1881, resulting in persecutions, further impoverishment, and a substantial increase in emigration.

In addition, there were regional circumstances and events that spurred departures. As for Nayshtot, its proximity to the German border was an important reason for making a living by long-distance trading in grain and flax. Some of the shtetl's inhabitants were farmers, but many – like Markus Schwartzman's father – owned shops. The contact with the world outside the shtetl may have been responsible for the urge to migrate. Furthermore, it may have been the

case that the Schwartzmans had taken part in or were the victims of the unsuccessful January Uprising in 1863 and had to flee.

A great fire destroyed most of the houses in the shtetl in 1865. Since the emancipation of the serfs in 1861, Jews had lost their position in the grain trade (Slezkine 2004, 115--116). A widespread crop failure and the subsequent famine in 1868–69 lead to a substantially weakened economy in the region. There was no grain to export, and thus no money to spend in the Jewish-owned shops.

In addition, there were occasionally deadly epidemics, such as the cholera outbreak of 1871. Lastly, the importance of Nayshtot as a hub of trade and transportation declined significantly in the late 1860s following the construction of the new railway between St Petersburg and Berlin. In sum, the rapid developments that shaped the means of making a livelihood in shtetls like Nayshtot also meant that there was a demand for the skills and trades of its inhabitants elsewhere, and regional occurrences spurred emigration.

We do not know exactly why Markus Schwartzman left Nayshtot for Sweden. However, his choices clearly illustrate how Jewish migration was chain migration. Jews came from certain areas of the Russian Empire – Suwałki in the case of the Schwartzmans – and one family emigrating led to others doing the same. Information spread by letters or word of mouth, hence when Jews settled in any of the Nordic cities, many already knew the other Jews living there.

While most of Markus Schwartzman's generation remained in Nayshtot, the next generation emigrated, as illustrated in table 1. His nephews, Israel and Abraham Schwartzman, followed in 1865, at the age of 21 and 12 respectively.

[INSERT table 1 HERE]

Table 1. The first generation of the Schwartzmans of Nayshtot migrating to Sweden in 1864–1865.

First name	Status in the family	Year of birth
Mordchai (Markus)	Head of the household	1821
Sara neé Katz	Wife	1828
Salomon Arje	Son	1843
Rosalia neé Friedman	Daughter-in-law	1840
Malka (later Malina)	Daughter	1851
Taube Hanna	Daughter	1853
Israel	Son	1858
Israel	Nephew	1844
Abraham	Nephew	1852

Source: Koritzinsky 1946, 57-69

The settlement pattern of the Schwartzmans indicates that Sweden was the centre for Eastern European Jews in the Nordic countries, especially in the first decades. For example, many of the first group of Eastern European Jewish settlers in Norway had previously lived in Sweden. Hence, there was also migration westward within the Nordic countries. Nonetheless, not all migrants to Sweden came directly from the Pale of Settlement. Some were born and grew up in Finland. For instance, Jenny (born in Malmö in 1884), Abraham Schwartzman's daughter, married David Lexenberg in 1903. Lexenberg was born and raised in Helsinki ("Lexenberg", Meliza's Genealogy).

From a large minority to a small community

Jews had always been a minority wherever they had lived, but in Eastern Europe they were a large minority prior to the Holocaust. Yiddish was a language so widely spoken that many non-Jewish Poles and Lithuanians had a comprehension of it, and those who worked in certain trades sometimes even mastered it.[5] In Northern Europe, Jews encountered a different Jewish culture and a new social position. From being part of a very large minority – who in fact constituted the majority of the population in the part of town they came from – they became a very small minority, and they were confronted by an assimilatory and rather homogeneous non-Jewish environment.

There were also substantial differences between the Nordic countries regarding social relations and values within the Jewish communities. The Eastern European Jews who moved to larger cities like Copenhagen, Gothenburg, and Stockholm met acculturated Jewish communities like the bourgeois Jews of Western Europe. These were communities and individuals with a rather stable economic position that in particular fostered the idea of the Germanic *Bildung*. Many regarded themselves as Danes or Swedes with a Mosaic faith rather than as ethnic Jews (Bredefeldt 2008, 214; Thing 2008, 25). The newcomers to Sweden and Denmark had to deal with the established communities' bourgeois way of life and strong opinions on how Jewishness should be expressed.

Thus, clear class and cultural distinctions between the old families and the Eastern European newcomers developed. For the likes of the Schwartzmans, who might have been impoverished but had probably belonged to the upper strata in Nayshtot, this may have been a difficult

[5] There are plenty of oral history types of anecdotes on pre-Holocaust Eastern Europe regarding this phenomenon (correspondence with Dr Simo Muir, 6 June 2016).

experience. In addition, the established communities' path of assimilation or acculturation was not an option for most newcomers. Rather, they defined themselves by traditions, culture, and Zionism (Banik 2016; Ekholm & Muir 2016). Not surprisingly, this created mutual suspicions. The established families feared that the Eastern European newcomers, with their foreign habits, language, and appearance, would cast a shadow on all Jews and increase the anti-Semitism they so carefully tried to avoid (Bredefeldt 2008, 77–78).

Despite the relative absence of discriminatory laws regarding civil rights, Jewish migrants were not necessarily warmly welcomed in the Nordic countries. For instance, Swedish and Norwegian authorities clearly discriminated against the naturalisation of Eastern European Jewish applicants (Carlsson 2004; Johansen 2005). As mentioned above, Jews were not granted citizenship in Finland until 1918. Anti-Semitism was latent at most times, but anti-Jewish sentiments were present in cartoons, media, and fiction (Andersson 2000; Lien 2016; Ekholm 2013, 109–110). Importantly, most of the anti-Semitism was directed against a particular notion of Jews or Jewishness, such as the Bolshevik Jew or the capitalist Jew. Only occasionally did sentiments target actual Jews living in the Nordic countries (E.g. Banik 2015, 21–30). Nevertheless, whether it was a fear of Bolshevism or criticism of capitalism, the idea of Jews as a factor behind the forces that were shaking up the modern world was often present in the rhetoric, regardless of the actual number of Jewish individuals (Ekholm & Muir 2016, 176). While there were no pogroms in the Nordic countries, the social sphere for Jews was rather narrow.

While Jewish life in Eastern Europe was gradually becoming more diverse, as outlined above, life in the Nordic countries was more one-dimensional. On the one hand, migration enabled families to pick and mix between the traditions they wanted to keep and new ideas, so they had

an opportunity to develop new Jewish identities. On the other hand, because of their small numbers and the presence of Jews already living in Denmark and Sweden, the communities were characterised by conformity. The number of Jewish organisations was few, and it was to some extent expected that all members would contribute to the community's maintenance. Hence, conformity made the choice of perceived Jewish values more limited.

In addition, we know that it was imperative to keep up appearances. For example, speaking Yiddish publicly was frowned upon by the children that were born in the Nordic countries (Banik & Levin 2010; Harviainen 1986, 16). It was important not to provoke society in general, and values and traditions from Eastern Europe that did not go down well in their new home country were quickly abandoned. In addition, they responded to the host society's ideas of 'Jewish behaviour' by actively avoiding undertakings that could confirm anti-Jewish sentiments.

Marriage patterns as tools for the transfer of values

As the daughters of Markus and Sara Schwartzman came of marriageable age, sons-in-law were found in Nayshtot, from the Nissalowitz and Lapidus families, among others. As with migrant communities in general, it was common for Jews to marry individuals from the same geographical area. In addition, mixed marriages were rare in Eastern Europe, both because of Jewish religion and tradition and because of the strained relationship between Jews and non-Jews in the Pale. Hence, while the communities in the Nordic countries gradually gave up many of the traditions of shtetl life, even those who were less religiously inclined still married fellow Jews. Interfaith marriages certainly happened, but they were condemned by the community.

While the main reason for the resistance was the matrilineal definition of Jewishness – a child was only Jewish if born of a Jewish mother – it was also firmly believed that these marriages inevitably led to complete assimilation. For example, a Jewish family in Helsinki declared their daughter dead to them when it turned out she had secretly married her non-Jewish fiancé (Smolar 2003, 57). The father called the police when he found out that his daughter had secretly married a non-Jewish man, only to be himself arrested and accused of deprivation of liberty when it transpired that he had tried to prevent the newlyweds from going to Stockholm on their honeymoon. Her brothers also accused her of stealing money to make her stay in Helsinki. According to the interrogation records, the bride's father did not even try to hide his motives: he simply wanted to bring his favourite daughter back home (Nyberg 2015, 36–37).

In 1919, a Nordic Jewish youth association (SJUF) was established by local Jewish youth organisations in each country. One of its informal goals was to facilitate marriages within the Nordic Jewish community, and the association explicitly stated that intermarriage would lead to expulsion. Throughout the interwar period, local youth groups alternated in hosting SJUF summer camps and meetings in each of the Nordic countries ("barn och ungdomsverksamhet,"*Fenno Judaica*). In addition, the Helsinki Jewish school made class trips to Tallinn, Estonia, with the informal agenda of letting Jewish youths meet one another (Ekholm 2013, 106). The aim of finding a Jewish spouse, preferably one maintaining Orthodox Jewish traditions and values – the *Yiddishkeyt* – may have softened class division and income gaps that otherwise would have become obvious within Eastern European Jewish circles.

A dominant feature of the Nordic Jews was that many in the first generation found a spouse in the region where they were born. Marriages also illustrate that the first and second generations

were closely connected. Marriages of cousins and second cousins was a common practice among Eastern European Jews. In fact, when Harry Koritzinsky went to Nayshtot in 1933 in preparation for writing his family chronicle, an elderly villager confirmed that the Lapidus, Nissalowitz, and Schwartzman families were considered *mishpokhe* – relatives – who had intermarried for generations while living in Nayshtot (Koritzinsky 1946, 6).

This tradition continued after leaving Eastern Europe. Markus Schwartzman's four children brought him 33 grandchildren, as table 2 demonstrates:

[INSERT table 2 HERE]

Table 2. The marriages and offspring of Markus and Sara Schwartzman's four children.

	Name of spouce	Place of birth	Year of marriage	Number of children
Salomon Arje	Dorothea Rosalia Friedman	Nayshtot	1863	9
Melina (Malka)	Klone Nissalowitsch	Nayshtot	1871	10
Taube Hanna	Berzik Lapidus	Nayshtot	1872	9
Israel	Rebekka Schelinsky	Hälsingborg, Sweden	1877	5

Source: Koritzinsky 1946.

Of the older grandchildren of Markus Schwartzman, the marriage pattern still followed the old traditions. For instance, Salomon Schwartzman, Markus Schwartzman's oldest son, had nine children together with his wife Dorothea Rosalia, all of whom were born and grew up in Sweden. Seven of Salomon's children married. They all took spouses who were born in Poland – or as in the case of one son, the daughter of a man from Poland. More so, three of the children were married to a spouse living in Nayshtot at the time (Korizinsky 1946, 57–67).

Markus Schwartzman's oldest daughter (and Salomon Schwartzman's sister), Malina (Malka), married Klone Nissalowitz. Another daughter Taube Hanna, married Berzik Lapidus. Both were men from the hometown.

When the daughters of Salomon grew up, two of them married Berzik Lapidus' brothers, who then moved to Sweden because of their marriages (Table 3; Korizinsky 1946, 45–49). Hence, the chain migration was also a family migration that continued for decades. Salomon's oldest son, Israel-Wolff, married Taube-Hanna's and Berzik's oldest daughter, Maria. One of Salomon's daughters, Rica Rachel, married Carl Norlander (Nissalowitz) from Nayshtot, who was a relative of Salomon's brother-in-law.

[INSERT table 3 HERE]

Table 3. The marriages of Salomon and Dorothea Rosalia Schwartzman's children, 1883–1902.

All children born in Malmö, Sweden between 1864 and 1878

Name of the child	Age	Year	Name of the Spouce	Age	Born in	Related to the family
Sara Emilia	19	1883	Mauritz Werner	24	Poland	
Anna Rosalia	24	1890	Nochem Lapidus	39	Nayshtot	Brother of Berzik and Elias Lapidus
Israel-Wolff	22	1892	Maria Lapidus	20	Kristinehamn, Sweden	Daughter of Berzik and Taube-Hanna
Lina	22	1893	Elias Lapidus	34	Nayshtot	Brother of Berzik and Nochem Lapidu
Maria Frederica	23	1895	Mauritz Jakobowsky	33	Poland	
Rica Rachel Eugenia	26	1901	Carl Norlander (Nissalowitsch)	32	Nayshtot	Relative to Malina Schwartzman's hus
Ragnhild Lea	**Not married**					
Marcus Frederick	24	1902	Rosa Jacobowsky	24	Uddevalla, Sweden	

Source: Koritzinksy 1946.

Marrying within the community made the maintenance and transfer of Jewish values easier smoother. It also ensured that traditional gender roles could be upheld, as maintained by Paula Hyman (1995). Rita Bredefeldt (2008) has demonstrated that the same development took place in Sweden; the middle-class values of the time quickly became perceived as Jewish values. As the bourgeois values shared many of the characteristics of traditional ways of being a Jewish wife and mother, the transition was easy.

A family business: Transferring values and knowledge through employment

Entrepreneurship is regarded as an alternative way of gaining access to a rather ethnically homogeneous labour market (E.g. Berg & Ljunggren 2010). And the Anglo-American debates – exemplified by the work of Andrew Godley – on the importance of culture versus the local context for upward social mobility among the Eastern European Jews are based on the fact that most Jewish migrants between 1880 and 1914 went into trade.

A common feature among the newly immigrated Jewish men from Eastern Europe was to start up as peddlers or petty traders; quite a few then moved on to establish a larger store or an import or wholesale business. Many sold goods provided by Jewish retailers or wholesalers. The very same pattern prevailed in the Nordic countries. In Sweden, nearly three quarters of first-generation Jews worked in trade-related occupations (Bredefeldt 2008, 58). In 1910, 89 per cent of the Jewish population in Norway worked in the same areas (Gjernes 2012, 148.). Interestingly, the Danish Jews of Eastern European descent were found at the other end of the production line; they were independent tailors and cobblers (Thing 2008, 86). At the time, the line between manufacturing and retail was often blurred, meaning that the Danish Jews may have been closer to their other Nordic counterparts in terms of occupation than the statistics tell.

The legal restrictions set upon Jews in Finland pushed those who were not employed by the Russian military into trade. The Finnish Senate prepared an edict in 1869 on the means of gaining a livelihood permitted to Russian soldiers – regardless of religion – and their families throughout Finland. It stated that they could pursue trade with self-made products, sell berries, and trade in second-hand clothes and shoes and cheap commodities.[6] A renewed edict in 1876 emphasised that this also applied to Jews; furthermore, they were not allowed to trade outside the restricted areas of Helsinki, Turku, and Vyborg (Torvinen 1989, 58–62). The edict can be interpreted in two overlapping ways. Firstly, it clearly indicated that Jews were supposed to find the means to make ends meet themselves, but they were not permitted to engage in trades that were regarded as nationally important, such as forestry. Secondly, it indicated the general setting in which the Finnish authorities defined Jews. Similar to their circumstances in the Pale, Jews were given the same narrow position of traditional middlemen traders: a position between the Russian military and the different social strata of Finnish society. They could work as second-hand dealers buying used clothes from the better-off and selling them on to the growing working class, or they could work as tailors or merchants outfitting the needs of military garrisons.

In the case of Finland, most Jews – whether first-, second-, or third -generation –were occupied in trade or small-scale manufacturing. Nevertheless, the trade-concentrated occupational structure did not change after the granting of full civil rights in 1918; rather, it remained strikingly stable (Ekholm 2013, 128). Given the history of the other Nordic countries, as well as the tendency of Jews to migrate to metropolises like London, New York, and Berlin, it is

[6] Angående i tjänst varande, och obestämd tid permitterad eller afskedad underbefäls och manskaps vid den i Finland förlagda ryska militär även om deras hustrurs och enkors rätt att här i landet utöva näringsfång, given i Helsingfors den 30 Juni 1869, § 17, (Law on forms of livelihood permitted for soldiers, given in Helsinki on 30 June 1869).

likely that trade would have been an obvious choice anyway, as the choices made by the children of Markus Schwartzman illustrate.

Markus Schwartzman's two sons followed in his footsteps by establishing shops in small towns in Sweden. His daughter, Taube Hanna, moved to Borås with her husband, Berzik Lapidus. Borås was growing rapidly at the time to become the centre of the Swedish textile and clothing industry (Olsson 2012, 79–87). In 1880, the couple established a shop selling ready-to-wear men's clothing (Suhonen 1990, 105–107). Eventually, they expanded into clothing manufacturing, and in 1906 they established a mail order business (Suhonen 1990). Hanna Lapidus was the owner until she passed away – as a very wealthy lady – in 1937. By that time, the family firm had become a large commercial enterprise: in 1933, it employed 300 workers, plus an additional 300 women who did piecework in their homes (Suhonen 1990, 107).

The grandson of Markus Schwartzman, named Marcus after his grandfather – a traditional naming pattern among the Ashkenazi Jews indicating that the family still observed the traditions – worked as a salesman for the Borås-based company *Erikson & Larson (*Hollberg and Roth 1943).

As this firm was non-Jewish, it reveals the opportunity and desire to learn the trade beyond the family firms. After a few years of training in selling ready-to-wear products, Marcus Schwartzman married a Jewish woman in Uddevalla. He established a small business manufacturing men's clothing with his (non-Jewish) friend, Hjalmar Nordström (Olsson 2012, 123, 125).[7] Within ten years, Schwartzman & Nordström had expanded and was the third largest factory – and the largest employer of women – in the city (Olsson 2012, 123).

[7] Nordström, however, left the business within a year.

Such examples reveal the continuity and success in trading and manufacturing. Jewish families in Sweden and Finland – and, to a somewhat smaller extent, in Norway – specialised almost completely in a new product for the time: ready-to-wear clothing. Producing ready-made outfits for men, women, and children was a growing industry offering very intense competition but the best opportunities in these newly industrialising societies.

Small-scale family-owned companies seldom leave any archival material, let alone written histories, and we only have sporadic sources showing how Jewish retailers ordered at least part of their selection from the Swedish-Jewish companies. The 1914-1915 ledger shows that some customers' names are familiar from the family register ("Dagboken" T. H. Lapidus 1914–1915). Companies with more prestige sometimes appear in memoires. Such is the case with *Kaplans Konfektionsfabrik* of Stockholm. The company was owned by Oscar and Marcus Kaplan, who were originally from Novgorod, Russia. Before establishing themselves in Stockholm, the brothers trained by doing piecework for *Schwartzman & Nordström* in Uddevalla (Kaplan, 1998, 217).

As briefly mentioned, many of the first wave of Jews from Eastern Europe moved to Sweden and then eventually on to other countries. Compared to Norway and Finland, Sweden was more developed and industrialised, and hence the natural first choice for immigrants. Time in Sweden was often spent learning the trade in a Nordic context, and those who eventually moved to Norway and Denmark took advantage of their Swedish experience in work life. For example, Elias O. Lapidus, who married Markus Schwartzman's granddaughter, learned his trade for six years with *T. H. Lapidus* in Borås, Sweden, which was owned by his brother and sister-in-law,

before he moved to Norway in 1889 to establish his own business.[8] He had permission to conduct trade in several cities in Norway, and even became a Norwegian citizen in 1896, before he moved back to Sweden and established a shop in Säffle and another later in Karlstad. Two of his brothers also settled temporarily in Norway. When the following generation of Eastern European Jews migrated directly to Norway, Denmark, or Finland, they were able to learn their trade from those who were already established.

There are also clear signs that parents and other relatives passed on their knowledge of their trade and other means of income to their children, regardless of gender, and the business was generally organised as a family firm. However, there is no reason to romanticise the Jewish family business networks. In a very business-oriented community, a bankrupt company could lead many into trouble. The families were embedded by marriages yet competed in business. Disagreement in business could lead to break-ups within families (Ekholm 2013, 106).

While there is nothing particularly Jewish about helping family members to earn a steady income or training them for a future in business, seen from the verbatim interpretation of Jewish tradition, providing support for fellow Jews is a commandment, a *Mitzvah*. Yet according to the sporadic source material left, rather than providing direct work for life, the established companies more often provided the means for learning the trade and getting started in self-employment.

Furthermore, there is another important aspect to the Jewish family firm – namely, the different requirements placed on men and women within a traditional Jewish family. There are many examples of women inspiring and indirectly teaching other women how to make a living over

[8] National Archives of Norway, Ministry of Justice, S-1040 - Justisdepartementet, 2. sivilkontor C Aktør: S-3F-10065 - 2. sivilkontor C, L0024 Statsborgerbrev nr.24 nr. 35 - 2893 1901.

several generations. Rachel and Salomon Oster immigrated to Oslo from present-day Lithuania in the late 1880s. While Salomon held the right to conduct trade according to the national censuses of 1900 and 1910, Rachel contributed to their income by keeping two lodgers, suggesting that it provided a steady income. In 1900, one of their daughter worked in a tobacco factory, while ten years later two other daughters, Marie Weinstock and Clara Oster, were listed as shop owners. In 1910, Marie Weinstock, who ran her shop with her husband, also had two lodgers, despite also having six children of various ages. A few years later, yet another sister established a similar enterprise with her husband in central Oslo.

The children of Marie Weinstock followed in her footsteps. Berta established and managed a shoe shop until Marie needed help with her store. Then Fanny, another daughter, took over the shoe store where a younger brother had been working for years. He later became an independent salesman. In addition, another brother, Meyer, worked as a sales clerk. Lastly, a third daughter, Esther, married a small-town Jewish merchant. She most likely worked part-time in the family shop.

This was a very common way for lower middle-class women in general to contribute to the family income at the time. Considering the prevailing ideal of the middle-class woman's place being in the home along with the religious traditions valued by Eastern European Jews, the active role of the Jewish female entrepreneur may seem contradictory. However, within the traditions these families brought with them from their place of birth, the ideal family allowed men to focus on religious studies, which in practice gave the women a strong role in matters concerning daily life. Jewish girls mainly attended secular schools and their education was not prioritised (Parush 2004). This resulted in a high percentage of Jewish women being involved in the non-Jewish market sphere, many as small--scale entrepreneurs. They earned their living

as traders, while others worked as seamstresses, tailors, or artisans (Compare the references in Morawska 1987, 33; Godley 2001, 68; and Neu 1976, 146). Hence, while men rarely were devoted full time to religious studies in the Nordic countries, the pattern of Jewish women working for a wage prevailed.

In Sweden, the story of *T. H. Lapidus* exemplifies this aspect of a gendered knowledge and value transfer. While Taube Hanna Lapidus was a co-owner together with her husband and ran the business with 'an iron fist', she is remembered as a woman who always kept herself in the background (Suhonen 1990, 106). It was her husband and later her sons who were the public faces of the company. Hence, she, at least publicly, followed the rules prescribed to middle-class women in society in general and among the Jews in particular. The ideal was being a homemaker, mother, and wife. However, if a Jewish family needed the extra income, running a store ranked highly in the hierarchy of work among female Eastern European Jews (Glenn 1990, 16). Thus, *T. H. Lapidus*' case is also an example of the family's combination of local and Jewish values as they navigated their existence in their new country of residence.

The story of Vera Stiller in Finland also serves as an example of the reversed public gender roles that were transferred from Eastern Europe to the Nordic countries. At the turn of the twentieth century, Wulf Nemeschansky, a wealthy Jewish merchant from Turku, married off his daughter, Vera, to a poor Jewish man, Abraham Stiller (Smolar 2003, 27). Abraham was the orphaned son of a Jewish soldier and a mother who had committed suicide; he had been adopted by a Jewish family in Helsinki. He was raised by the former soldier and petty-trader Jakob Josef Kaffkin, who wanted him to become learned in religious matters, someone who knew the Torah and Talmud. Thus, due to his religious knowledge, a poor Jewish boy like Abraham could ensure a wealthy marriage. Although the Stiller's shop, *Atelier Stiller*, was

formally run by Abraham Stiller, it was generally known that it was Mrs Stiller who ran the store and were behind its success as a dresser of upper-class ladies (Smolar 2003, 27).

Another example illustrates the closeness of the extended family and the transfer of knowledge. As mentioned above, Jenny, Abraham Schwartzman's daughter, married the Finnish-born David Lexenberg in 1903. After a short stint in Oslo, where their first child was born, they moved to Halmstad in Sweden, where they briefly owned a cigarette factory, among other enterprises (Svensk tobakhistoria, Halmstad, Cigarettfabriken Progress, Gedin & Lexenberg). While we have not been able to prove any direct connection, it is likely that they learned something from Carl Julius and Lina Estersohn, who began their involvement in cigarette production there a few years earlier (Svensk tobakhistoria, Halmstad, Cigarettfabriken Symbol, retrieved 29 April 2015). Lina Estersohn, who ran the factory after her husband's death in 1908, was the daughter of Berzik and Taube Hanna Lapidus, and hence a distant relative of Jenny Lexenberg. As with the Weinstocks, Lina Estersohn had learned her trade from her mother, Taube Hanna. Another example of relatives helping relatives is provided by Israel Schwartzman, Abraham's brother. According to his great granddaughter, affluent relatives helped him financially to set up a shop selling garments (Norsk Folkemuseum, Wergelands Barn, NFAV.006-069).

Following Jewish families from Eastern Europe in the Nordic countries shows that transfers of knowledge and concrete help in terms of start-up capital took place on many levels. As demonstrated earlier, there was a connection between what Jewish migrants did for a living in Eastern Europe and their occupational choices in the Nordic countries. Work-related knowledge was also transferred within the Nordic countries and across the generations by individuals moving to other cities or countries after having been trained by close family or distant relatives.

Culture, context, and family networks: Concluding remarks

Millions of Europeans migrated in the four decades prior to World War I with the aim of starting a new life. The migrating populations in general and Eastern European Jewish migrants in particular have inspired scholars to ask questions concerning the interplay between the values and knowledge of the migrants and their new countries.

Nearly all migrants face a situation where they are given a minority identity upon arrival. The Jews, however, had already been a minority – albeit a substantial one – in their Eastern European Jewish homelands.

Our examples clearly demonstrate that the national borders between the Nordic countries were easily crossed many times in the search for a new life. This was a very common feature of the Nordic countries in general, but the Jews did not follow the common pattern. For instance, while most Swedes working in Norway settled in places fairly close to their Swedish place of birth, Jews moving from Sweden to Norway mainly settled where other Jews lived (Myhre 2005, 93).

This notion has important implications for understanding knowledge transfers. The transfer of knowledge did not stop at national borders. While Sweden was a centre, Jews moved to Denmark and Norway when opportunities arose, or a Jewish spouse was to be found. Jews from Finland in turn found their way to Sweden. Sweden was also a centre of opportunities for Jewish individuals. When some decided to move on to Norway, the knowledge they had gained while living in Sweden most probably provided a comparative advantage.

This knowledge in most cases related to the skills and trades Jews brought from Eastern Europe and further developed in their new country of residence. Most Eastern European Jews, like Markus Schwartzman, went into a trade when they settled. Hence, the combination of work experience in the east and the political, social, and economic development in the Nordic countries play an important part in understanding why Jews settled and how they earned their living. However, the basic skills Jews possessed were all in trades where the barriers to entry were generally low. As Eli Lederhendler has suggested, an Eastern European background as a petty trader or artisan was not necessary an advantage when settling. Lederhendler's arguments, however, relate to the east coast of United States, which at the time was clearly more industrialised compared to the Nordic countries. While there may be some truth to his assertions in the context of the United States, the Nordic countries were different: it may well have been the case that settling in the northern reaches of Europe was easier than it would have been in more industrialised countries – there was much less competition, but the demand for the products Jews were making and selling was increasing. The Nordic countries were less developed than the US at the turn of the twentieth century, but the great majority of the cities where substantial numbers of Jews settled witnessed rapid expansion as centres of industrialisation or transport hubs for goods produced in factories. Urbanisation led to a growing demand for skilled and unskilled workers and specialists, including those who could produce and sell ready-made goods. In sum, the Nordic countries provided a niche that could be capitalised on by families like the Schwartzmans and Lapidus'.

Nevertheless, the Jewish communities in the Nordic countries remained small. As we have established above, the first and to some extent the second generation placed great value to finding a partner from the original home region. Thus, compared to cities like London or New York, Jews who eventually moved to the Nordic countries were already a somewhat select

group. This is especially evident in Finland, where their right to stay was connected to military service in the Imperial army, which included Jewish merchants who outfitted the garrisons. However, it is possible that merchants like Markus Schwartzman were not among the poorest members of his home community, and while their children married spouses from the home region, those who moved to Sweden tended to have well established networks upon arriving in the new country.

Most Jews remained in a trade-related business or continued to work as artisans. However, with gradually increasing individual exceptions, many advanced from being peddlers to establishing a shop and becoming involved in the production or wholesale trade of goods. Before establishing oneself, a trade was learned by working for a relative, in some cases as a self-employed 'freelancer'. It is important to note that women also contributed significantly to this process.

Thus, despite the financial instability that characterised the interwar period, a number experienced an increase in their income that secured them a solid place in bourgeois society. Others remained a part of the lower middle class throughout their life. Thus, there were also class distinctions *within* the Eastern European Jewish communities. At the same time, the strong tendency to marry fellow Jews cushioned such distinctions.

There is no doubt that upward social mobility was desired, and in many ways a value in itself. Upward social mobility was the goal, and entrepreneurship was a tool to realise it. Spouses set up businesses together, and the work of the wives was often crucial for running the enterprise on a daily basis. Daughters often worked as sales assistants in their parents' business. The partial gender blindness was caused by two seemingly conflicting values: on the one hand, there

was an emphasis on middle-class values where the real place of a wife was in the domestic sphere, on the other hand, there was the long experience of business in Eastern Europe. The Jews, like many other middle-class families at the time, solved this conflict of values by making a male the public face of the company. While some moved on to academic professions, the majority of the second generation – and in the case of the Lapidus family, the third generation – remained in trade-related businesses.

When looking at the marriage patterns of the first and to some extent second generation of the Schwartzman, Lapidus, and Nissalowitz families, it is clear they were still mentally bound to Eastern Europe. In a region where the selection of potential Jewish spouses was modest, a great effort was made to ensure Jewish intermarriage. However, the values placed upon Jewish marriage did change from traditional religious requirements into bourgeois middle-class values. This is highlighted in the family chronicle that was the point of departure of the study above: signs of upward social mobility such as degrees awarded, or positions gained in society are carefully documented. While the chronicle's author has a great nostalgia for the old, pre-war times and happy childhood memories when the family was still h eld together despite a lack of material means, the fact that Judaism as a religion is almost absent in the booklet. One can argue that religion was something the author took for granted. At the same time, it demonstrates that definitions of Jewishness and Jewish identities changed profoundly during the period. There is, however, no doubt that remaining Jewish – however redefined – was an important value. When adopting values from the Nordic societies, Jews from Eastern Europe did not adjust to an abstract set of 'Nordic values', but to bourgeois middle-class ideals.

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Wergelands Barn

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